

Instructor Page

In this series of problem-solving activities, students will get practice asking questions about printed health information or instructions. Research has shown that adults often have difficulty understanding printed medication information or instructions, but that few people ask the pharmacist or other health professional for explanations. This Problem-Solving activity will give students practice in asking questions so that they are comfortable doing so in real-life situations.

For each Case Study, students should imagine that a pharmacist has given them some print information about a medication. Instructors should read the instructions on each Case Study aloud to students, but the students should read the medication information silently to themselves. The reading material provided is actual medication information, which is likely to be very challenging for beginning ABE students to read and understand. After giving students a brief period to look over the material, instructors should ask students what questions they would want answered about the medication. If questions are not forthcoming, some prompts are provided below. **Do not try to teach students to read the medication information; rather, stress to students the importance of asking a health professional these questions.**

Questions To Encourage Medications Inquiry

These questions should be used if students aren't volunteering with clarifying or reflective questions of their own in response to reading the medication information passages. These questions are meant to demonstrate that students may not have understood everything they have read about the medication. (Instructors may make up their own questions.) Discussion should also focus on who might be able to answer questions about medications.

Case Study A: Tricor

1. What is this medicine used for?
 2. How should this medicine be taken? With food or milk? On an empty stomach?
 3. What happens if you miss a dose?
 4. What cautions are listed until you know how you are going to react to taking this medication?
 5. What cautions are listed especially for women?
 6. What are some possible side effects?
 7. Which side effects require you to check with your doctor as soon as possible if you are experiencing them?
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1. What is this medicine used for?
2. What are inhalators?
3. How many inhalations are you allowed at one time? How much time should there be between the first and second inhalation?
4. What happens if you miss a dosage?
5. Which side effects, if experienced, mean that you should contact your doctor as soon as possible?

Case Study C: Zyrtec

1. What is this medicine used for?
2. What happens if you miss a dose?
3. How does this medicine interact with alcohol?
4. What might be dangerous to do while taking this medicine alone or with other medications?
5. Who should not take this medicine?
6. What are some side effects?

Case Study D: Butalbital

1. What is this medication used for?
 2. What can you do to prevent an upset stomach when you take the medication?
 3. Which side effects may last only the first few days you take this medication?
 4. Which side effects should be reported promptly to your doctor?
 5. What precautions are listed because this medication contains aspirin?
 6. What drug interactions do you need to be aware of? Which prescription and over-the-counter medications will be serious drug interactions with this medication?
 7. What happens if you miss a dose?
 8. What does it mean if the medication has a strong vinegar odor?
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Case Study A: Tricor

Directions: You got a prescription for the medication Tricor. You took the prescription to get it filled. The pharmacist gave you the medication and an information sheet about the medication. Read below about Tricor.

While reading about Tricor, think about these questions. Can you read and understand all this information? Do you have any questions about the medication? How will you get answers to your questions?

TRICOR 160 MG

TAB ABB

GENERIC NAME: FENOFIBRATE (fen-oh-FYE-brate)

COMMON USES: This medicine is a lipid lowering agent used along with your diet to control high cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood.

HOW TO USE THIS MEDICINE: Follow the directions for using this medicine provided by your doctor. TAKE THIS MEDICINE with food or milk. STORE THIS MEDICINE at room temperature between 59 and 86 degrees F (15 and 30 degrees C) in a tightly-closed container, away from heat, moisture and light. IF YOU MISS A DOSE OF THIS MEDICINE, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do NOT take 2 doses at once.

CAUTIONS: DO NOT EXCEED THE RECOMMENDED DOSE without checking with your doctor. KEEP ALL DOCTOR AND LABORATORY APPOINTMENTS while you are using this medicine. DO NOT DRIVE, OPERATE MACHINERY, OR DO ANYTHING ELSE THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS until you know how you react to this medicine. Using this medicine alone, with other medicines, or with alcohol may lessen your ability to drive or to perform other potentially dangerous tasks. THIS MEDICINE MAY CAUSE increased sensitivity to the sun. Avoid exposure to the sun, sunlamps, or tanning booths until you know how you react to this medicine. Use a sunscreen or protective clothing if you must be outside for a prolonged period. BEFORE YOU BEGIN TAKING ANY NEW MEDICINE, either prescription or over-the-counter, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

Case Study A: Tricor, continued

FOR WOMEN: IF YOU PLAN ON BECOMING PREGNANT, discuss with your doctor the benefits and risks of using this medicine during pregnancy. IT IS UNKNOWN IF THIS MEDICINE IS EXCRETED in breast milk. DO NOT BREAST-FEED while taking this medicine.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS: SIDE EFFECTS that may occur while taking this medicine include stomach pain, nausea, constipation, gas, headache, or dizziness. If they continue or are bothersome, check with your doctor. CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE if you experience muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness; flu-like symptoms; unusual tiredness, fever, or joint pain; itching; or rash. CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY if you experience the following side effects: coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

The information in this monograph is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions, or adverse effects. This information is generalized and is not intended as specific medical advice. If you have questions about the medicines you are taking or would like more information, check with your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

Case Study B: Ventolin Inhalator

Directions: You got a prescription for the medication Ventolin Inhalator. You took the prescription to get it filled. The pharmacist gave you the medication and an information sheet about the medication. Read below about Ventolin Inhalator.

While reading about the Ventolin Inhalator, think about these questions. Can you read and understand all this information? Do you have any questions about the medication? How will you get answers to your questions?

Prepared for

Jane Doe

Drug name

Quantity

VENTOLIN INHL. 17G COMPLETE 17

Date

Prescription No.

10/19/2003

474649

Prescribed by

Dr. Smith

Directions

USE AS DIRECTED BY PHYSICIAN

PROPER USE OF THIS MEDICINE

Follow the directions for using this medicine provided by your doctor.

THIS MEDICINE MAY COME with a patient information leaflet. Read it carefully. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist any questions that you may have before using this medicine. **WHEN USING THIS MEDICINE:** keep the spray away from your eyes. Do not use more than 2 inhalations of this medicine at 1 time, unless otherwise directed by your doctor. Allow 1 to 2 minutes after the first and second inhalation. Save your mouthpiece because refill units may be available. **STORE AWAY FROM** heat and direct sunlight. Do not puncture, break, or burn container. **IF YOU MISS A DOSE OF THIS MEDICINE** and you are using it regularly, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not use 2 doses at once.

ABOUT YOUR MEDICINE

ALBUTEROL (al-BYOO-ter-ole)

This medicine is used to treat and prevent the symptoms of asthma, emphysema, and other breathing conditions. This medicine is used to prevent the symptoms of exercise induced asthma. It may also be used to treat other conditions as determined by your doctor.

Case Study B: Ventolin Inhalator, continued

**PRECAUTIONS WHILE USING THIS
MEDICINE**

IF YOUR CONDITION PERSISTS or gets worse after using this medicine, contact your doctor. BEFORE YOU BEGIN TAKING ANY NEW MEDICINE, either prescription or over-the-counter, check with your doctor or pharmacist. IF YOU ARE ALSO USING AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY (CORTICOSTEROID, CROMOLYN) OR IPRATROPIUM INHALER, use this medicine first and wait a few minutes before using the anti-inflammatory or ipratropium, unless directed otherwise by your doctor. THIS MEDICINE MAY CAUSE dry mouth or an unpleasant taste in your mouth. Rinsing your mouth with water after each dose may help relieve these complaints.

**POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF THIS
MEDICINE**

SIDE EFFECTS, that may go away during treatment, include fast heart rate, nervousness, tremors, headache, difficulty sleeping, or nausea. If they continue or are bothersome, check with your doctor. CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE if you experience rash, hives, itching, wheezing, or increased difficulty breathing. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Case Study C: Zyrtec

Directions: You got a prescription for the medication Zyrtec. You took the prescription to get it filled. The pharmacist gave you the medication and an information sheet about the medication. Read below about Zyrtec.

While reading about Zyrtec, think about these questions. Can you read and understand all this information? Do you have any questions about the medication? How will you get answers to your questions?

ZYRTEC

GENERIC NAME: CETIRIZINE (se-TI-ra-zeen)

COMMON USES: This medicine is an antihistamine used to treat hay fever and other allergic conditions such as watery eyes, runny nose, itching eyes, and sneezing.

HOW TO USE THIS MEDICINE: Follow the directions for using this medicine provided by your doctor. THIS MEDICINE MAY BE TAKEN on an empty stomach or with food. STORE THIS MEDICINE at room temperature, away from heat and light. IF YOU MISS A DOSE OF THIS MEDICINE, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not take 2 doses at once.

CAUTIONS: THIS MEDICINE WILL ADD TO THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL and other depressants. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions. DO NOT DRIVE, OPERATE MACHINERY, OR DO ANYTHING ELSE THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS until you know how to react to this medicine. Using this medicine alone, with other medicines, or with alcohol may lessen your ability to drive or to perform other potentially dangerous tasks. FOR WOMEN: IT IS UNKNOWN IF THIS MEDICINE IS EXCRETED in breast milk. DO NOT BREAST-FEED while taking this medicine.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS: SIDE EFFECTS, that may go away during treatment, include drowsiness or dry mouth. If they continue or are bothersome, check with your doctor. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

If you have questions about this medicine, check with your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse.

Case Study D: BUTALBITAL/ASA/Caffeine Tab

Directions: You got a prescription for the medication Butalbital. You took the prescription to get it filled. The pharmacist gave you the medication and an information sheet about the medication. Read below about Butalbital.

While reading about Butalbital, think about these questions. Can you read and understand all this information? Do you have any questions about the medication? How will you get answers to your questions?

BUTALBITAL/ASA/CAFFEINE TAB

USES: This medication is a pain reliever and sedative. It is used to relieve mild to moderate pain and tension headaches.

HOW TO USE: To prevent upset stomach, take this medication with food or milk. Take this medication with 6 to 8 ounces (180-240ml) of water. Do not lie down for at least 30 minutes after taking this drug. Pain medications work best in preventing pain before it worsens. Once the pain becomes intense, the medication is not as effective in relieving it. Use this medication exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase your dose, use it more frequently or use it for a longer period of time than prescribed because this drug can be habit-forming. Also, if used for an extended period of time, do not suddenly stop using this drug without your doctor's approval. Over the time, this drug may not work as well. Consult your doctor if this medication is not relieving the pain sufficiently. If your headache gets worse or if you should get a new headache within one day of starting this medication, call your doctor.

SIDE EFFECTS: May cause lightheadedness, dizziness, drowsiness, stomach upset, nausea, and sleeping disturbances the first few days as your body adjusts to the medication. If these symptoms persist or worsen, inform your doctor promptly. Unlikely but report promptly: rapid or irregular heartbeat, ringing in the ears, stomach pain, easy bruising or bleeding, black stools, yellowing eyes or skin, dark urine. In the unlikely event you have an allergic reaction to this drug, seek immediate medical attention. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include: rash, itching swelling, dizziness, breathing trouble. If you notice other effects not listed above, contact your doctor or pharmacist.

Case Study D: Butalbital, continued

PRECAUTIONS: Tell your doctor your medical history, especially of: kidney or liver disease, lung/breathing problems, nasal polyps, diabetes, stomach ulcers, blood disorders, a history of drug/alcohol dependence, high blood pressure. This combination medication contains aspirin. Children and teenagers should not take aspirin if they have chickenpox, influenza or any undiagnosed illness without first consulting a doctor about Reye's syndrome, a rare but serious illness. Use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness such as driving or operating machinery. Limit alcohol intake. This medicine may cause stomach bleeding. Daily use of alcohol, especially when combined with this medicine, may increase your risk for stomach bleeding. Check with your doctor or pharmacist for more information. Elderly persons are usually more sensitive to the effects of this medication. Use cautiously. Aspirin is not recommended for use during pregnancy. Consult your doctor before using this medication. This drug is excreted into breast milk and may have undesirable effects on a nursing infant. Consult your doctor before you breast-feed.

DRUG INTERACTIONS: Tell your doctor of all prescription and over-the-counter medication you may use including: blood thinners (e.g., warfarin, heparin, ticlopidine), NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen), steroids (e.g., prednisone), metronidazole, doxycycline, theophylline, methotrexate, certain drugs for heart rhythm disturbances (e.g., quinidine), diabetes drugs, drugs used for gout, glaucoma medicine, estrogens, cyclosporine, certain beta-blockers (e.g., propranolol). Also, tell your doctor if you take medicines that make you drowsy such as: anti-seizure drugs, tranquilizers, other narcotic pain relievers, anti-anxiety drugs, psychiatric medicine, muscle relaxants, certain antihistamines (e.g., diphenhydramine). Aspirin/NSAIDs are ingredients in many over-the-counter products. To prevent an overdose of aspirin/NSAIDs, read the labels carefully before taking other pain relievers or cold products to be sure they do not contain these drugs. Consult your pharmacist if you are uncertain your over-the-counter products contain aspirin/NSAIDs. This medication contains caffeine. Avoid drinking large amounts of caffeinated beverages while taking this medication as excessive nervousness and irritability can occur. This drug may interfere with the effectiveness of birth control pills. Discuss using other methods of birth control with your doctor. Do not start or stop any medicine without doctor or pharmacist approval.

MISSED DOSE: If you miss a dose, take it as soon as remembered. Do not take if it is almost time for the next dose; instead, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not "double-up" the dose to catch up.

STORAGE:

Store at room temperature away from sunlight and moisture. Discard if you detect a strong vinegar odor. This means the aspirin in the product has broken down.